

DNR NEWS

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Camping in Indiana is about to get easier

Camping at your favorite Indiana state park has been a family tradition since the days of the Model T. And whether you pitch a tent for one or hook-up an RV that sleeps six, camping in Indiana is about to get easier for you.

Beginning Dec. 2 more than 7,500 campsites at state parks, state reservoirs and state recreation areas will be available for reservation up to six months in advance by simply calling a toll-free telephone number or logging onto the Internet.

“Indiana will have a state of the art reservation system focused on the needs of our customers,” said John Goss, director of the Department of Natural Resources.

“It will take just a few minutes on the phone or on the Internet to reserve your favorite campsite at your favorite DNR-managed campground. If someone beat you to that site, we’ll help you find another good one. If the campground is full, we’ll help you find a campsite at another state campground.

“One of the features I like best is a map of each campground listed on the Internet reservation system. That makes it especially easy to reserve a site by the lake, under the shade of an old sycamore or a short walk from the showers,” Goss said.

The reservation system will be in place for all campsites, ranging from primitive to full service hook-ups, at:

20 of the 22 state parks (Ft. Harrison and Falls of the Ohio State Parks have no campsites.), the state reservoirs (except for J.E. Roush (Huntington) Lake), and Starve Hollow, Deam Lake, and Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Areas (which are located within state forests).

Shelters, cabins and recreation buildings can be reserved up to one year in advance.

The reservations will be made at no additional cost to the camper. This year and previously, a fee of \$6 was charged for a campsite reservation.

The DNR has contracted with Spherix, Inc. of Beltsville Md.(301/419-3900) to manage the reservation system. Spherix currently manages reservations for more than 140 state and national parks working with the National Park Service and the states of Delaware, Michigan and Maryland. Paid on a per site/per day basis, Spherix, Inc. probably will receive about \$1.4 million for managing the reservations in 2003, based on past campsite occupancy.

The charges paid by DNR to Spherix, Inc. will come from campsite rental fees. The park fees, as was announced this summer, will be increased for 2003 to pay for increased costs of campsite maintenance, to cover tax revenue shortfalls and for the new reservation system. The old \$6 reservation fee will be eliminated. As a result, most campers who traditionally reserve their campsite will see only a modest increase in costs.

Campers will be able to make reservations by calling, toll free, 1-866-6CAMPIN (1-866-622-6746) Monday through Friday from Noon to 8 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and Saturday between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. E.S.T. They may also log onto the Internet 24 hours a day at www.camp.in.gov.

Whether using the telephone or the computer, campers will pre-pay for their stay when they make the reservation through credit card (MasterCard or Visa) and debit card. Money orders can be accepted for telephone reservations made 15 or more days prior to arrival.

“For the past several years our customers have told us the improvement they most wanted was a good reservation system for campsites,” said Jerry Pagac, director of the division of state parks and reservoirs. “We have now found and will have up and running the finest reservation system available for all those who enjoy camping at our DNR properties.”

In previous years, campers heading out for a weekend of camping did not always know if they would have a campsite available. Only a portion of campsites would be available for reservation and the rest were on a first come/first served basis, often requiring families to sit in line outside their favorite state park just to find out if a campsite would become available. The March system of mailing in reservation requests often took too long for a family to find out if they got that campsite for their summer plans.

FAQ

Indiana State Park, Forest and Reservoir Central Reservation System

When Does the new CRS become active?

It will begin operation on December 2, 2002

How can I make a reservation?

Two ways, by Internet at www.camp.in.gov and by calling a toll free Call Center at 1-866-6CAMPIN (1-866-622-6746).

- **The Internet** will be available 24 hours a day after the first date of availability.
- **The Call Center** hours will be Monday – Friday Noon – 8 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (all year round).

While reservations are not required, we recommend that you reserve your campsite in advance to ensure that you will have a site at the property of your choice.

What facilities can be reserved?

Campsites – can be reserved as early as six months in advance to the date of arrival and as late as noon on the date of arrival.

Cabins, Shelters & Recreation Buildings – can be reserved up to one year in advance to the date of arrival and as early as 48 hours prior to the date of arrival.

What does it cost to make a reservation?

There is no fee for making a reservation. The entire rental fee must be paid at the time the reservation is made for all facilities.

How do I pay?

- If making a reservation through the Internet, payment can be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard) or debit card.
- When making a reservation through the Call Center, payment Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard), debit cards are accepted. Money orders are accepted if you are making the reservation 15 days or more before the date of arrival. Credit card or debit card is required if it is less than 15 days prior to the date of arrival.

What if I have to cancel my reservation?

All cancellations must be made by contacting the call center at 1-866-622-6746.

Camping: If canceling before 8:00 p.m. on the day before arrival a \$10 cancellation fee is charged. If canceling after 8:00 p.m. on the day before arrival a \$10 cancellation fee plus the first night rental fee is charged. No partial cancellation can be made. The entire reservation must be canceled.

Cabins: If canceling 91 days or more prior to the date of arrival a \$25 cancellation fee is charged. If canceling 90 days or less prior to the date of arrival a cancellation fee of \$75 or the first night rental fee, whichever is less will be charged. No partial cancellation can be made. The entire reservation must be canceled.

Shelter/Recreation Building: If canceling 15 days or more prior to the date of arrival the cancellation fee is half of the rental fee. If canceling 14 days or less prior to the date of arrival, the cancellation fee is 100% of the rental fee.

What will I need to provide when making a reservation?

Both the Internet and Call Center agents will need the following information to complete your reservation.

Camping:

- Arrival/departure date
- Your name, address & phone number
- The name of the property you wish to visit (or your second choice in case first choice is not available)
- Type of camping equipment you will be using: tent, pop-up, RV, etc. (RV & motor homes will need to know the total length of the rig from the front to back, including the tow rig)
- Number in your party
- Method of payment

Cabins:

- Arrival/departure date
- Your name, address & phone number
- The name of the property you wish to visit (if they are full ask to be referred to a property nearby)
- Number in your party
- Method of payment

Shelters/Recreation Buildings:

- Arrival/departure date
- Your name, address & phone number
- The name of the property you wish to visit (if they are full ask to be referred to a property nearby)
- Number in your party
- Method of payment